

Food Safety and Consumer Protection Division

Mission Statement:

Maintain and advance an equitable and safe marketplace through fair enforcement of Vermont's laws and rules and technical assistance for the regulated community to foster their success.

What do we do? We ensure safe foods and fair markets for all Vermonters

We are made up of the following Sections:

- Agricultural Products • Animal Health • Dairy • Meat Inspection • Weights and Measures

We regulate the Vermont meat and poultry industry to protect the public from foodborne illness.

Food Safety and Consumer Protection Division



PRODUCE SAFETY

Staff implement food safety standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing & holding of fresh produce. 6 V.S.A. chp. 66.

The goal is to ensure fresh fruits and vegetables are produced safely in order to prevent outbreaks of foodborne pathogens that can cause severe illness (e.g., pathogenic *E. coli* or *Salmonella*).

- ~30 farms undergo routine inspections
- ~150 farms are exempt but must keep required records
- ~450 farms are excluded from all requirements (due to size, end-use, or type of crops)

Staff also provide training, site-visits, and regulatory guidance to the industry to enhance understanding and compliance.

The program has been supported and funded by the Food and Drug Administration through a cooperative agreement since 2016.



AG. PRODUCTS **FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022**



Inspector observes harvesting practices (above and right) and packing practices (below)



MAPLE

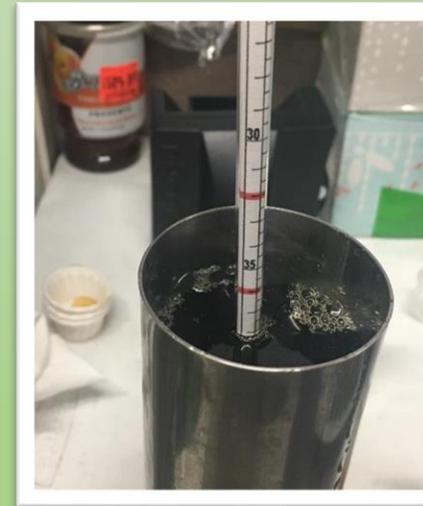
Staff inspect maple products at the point of sale to enforce VT grade standards (color, flavor, clarity, density) and labeling requirements. 6 V.S.A. chp. 32.

Staff also respond to consumer complaints, investigate food safety concerns, and provide regulatory guidance to the industry.

AAFAM has state-level authority over pure maple products and works with Vermont Department of Health on cross-jurisdictional maple issues.

Maple production facilities are largely exempt from state-level food safety requirements, licensing, or inspection.

- ~20 retail store inspections/year
- 59% of maple syrup products passed inspection in 2022
- Compliance issues found include color too dark for grade, off-flavors, mold, high/low density, and one instance of lead contamination



Inspector grades maple syrup at retail stores



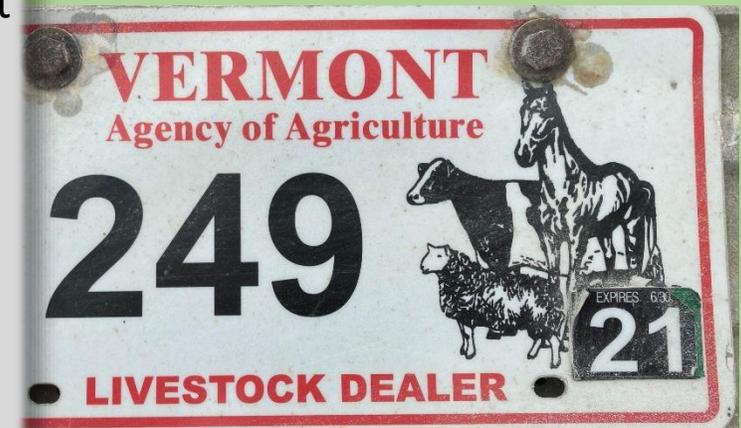
Animal Health

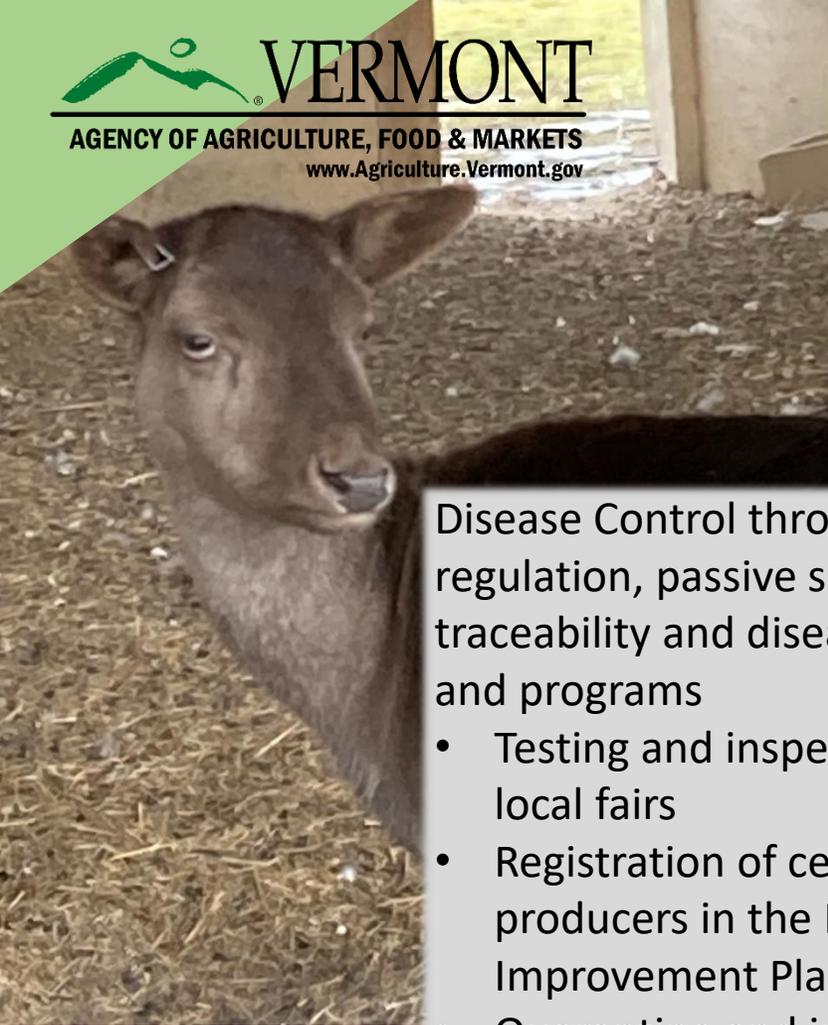
Food Safety and Consumer Protection Division

Our primary goal is to protect the health of Vermont animal agriculture by controlling disease spread and mitigating economic impacts

What we do:

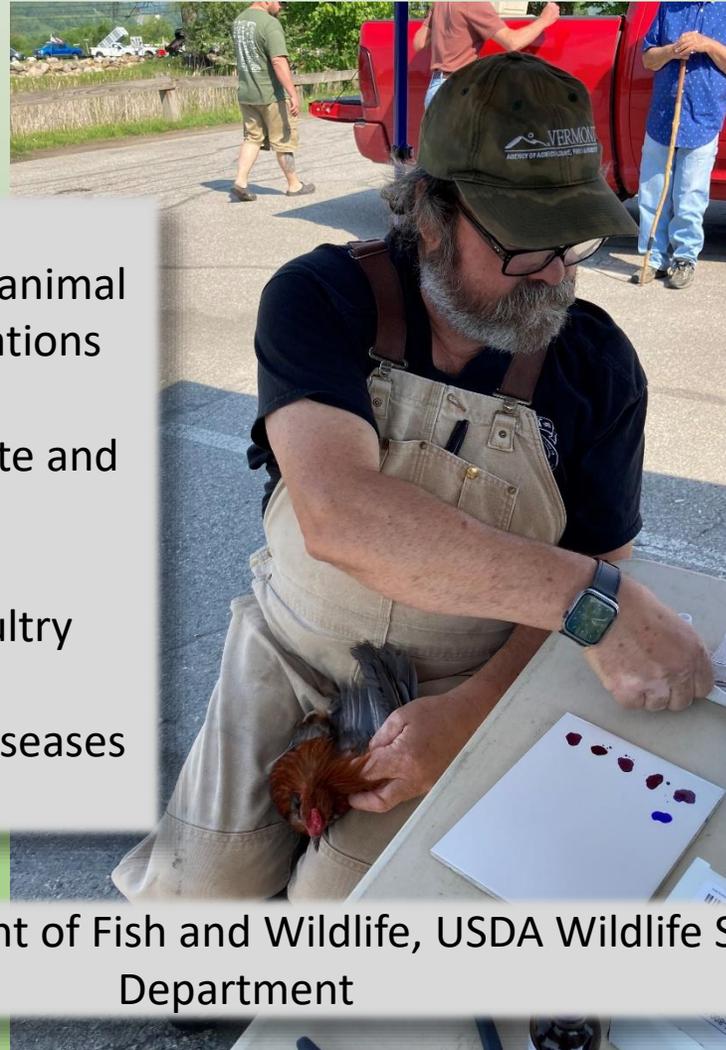
- License and inspect livestock dealers, transporters, and sales to promote responsible animal commerce. This also includes pet shops and some shelters.
- Active and passive disease surveillance
- Regulation of inter- and intrastate movement of animals
- We work closely with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Department of Fish and Wildlife, USDA Wildlife Services, and the Vermont Health Department





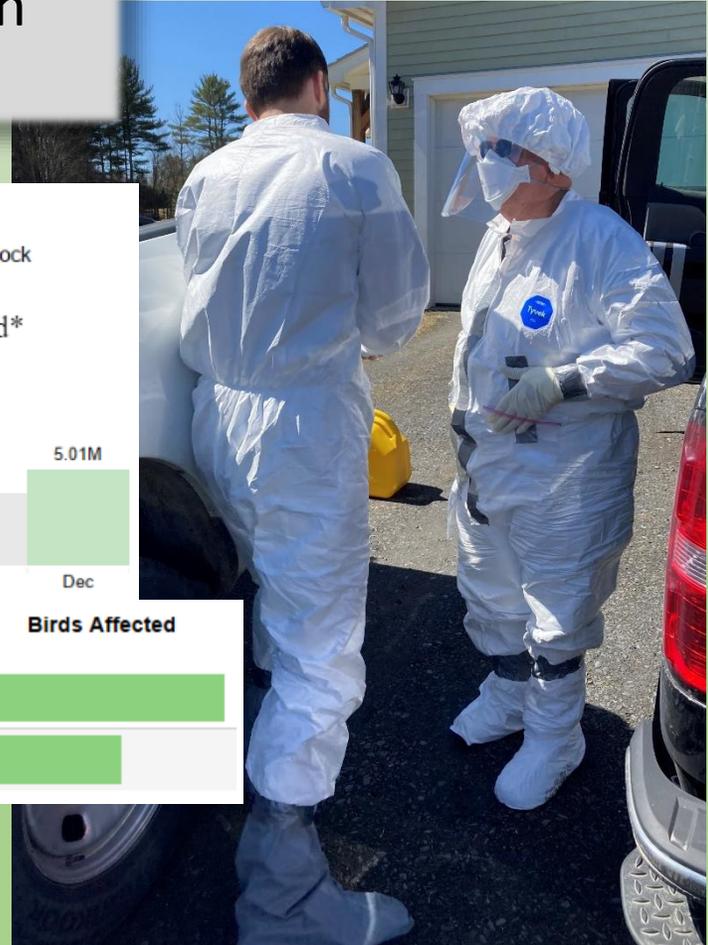
Disease Control through import regulation, passive surveillance, animal traceability and disease investigations and programs

- Testing and inspections at state and local fairs
- Registration of cervids and producers in the National Poultry Improvement Plan
- Quarantine and investigate diseases of concern



We work closely with USDA APHIS, Department of Fish and Wildlife, USDA Wildlife Services, and the Vermont Health Department

Current national outbreak: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

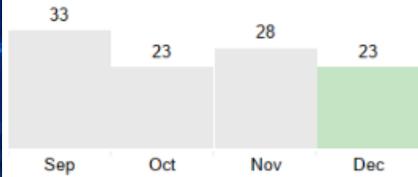


711 Confirmed Flocks

Birds tested and confirmed having HPAI

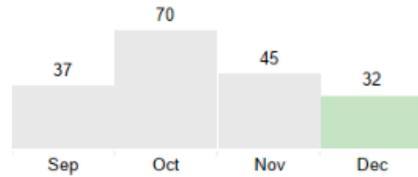
Commercial Flocks

304



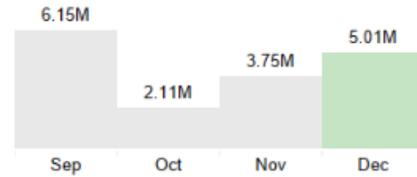
Backyard Flocks

407



Birds Affected*

57.77M



Confirmed	State	County Name	Production	Control Area Released	Birds Affected
06-Dec-22	Vermont	Lamoille	WOAH Non-Poultry	Active	50
28-Apr-22	Vermont	Caledonia	WOAH Non-Poultry	12-May-22	30

Food Safety Specialist are scheduled based on the facilities pre-approved hours of operations. Coverage for slaughterhouses can be up to 8 hours per day, 5 days per week.

When the Food Safety Specialists are not assigned to Official State, Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) or USDA establishments, they perform custom exempt plant inspections and in-distribution compliance and evaluation activities.

Types of Slaughter/Processing	Number of Facilities
State Slaughter/Processing	10
Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS)	3
USDA Federal Slaughter/Processing	19
Custom Exempt Slaughter/Processing	38
Retail	Over 1800

Cooperative agreement with USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) enforcing requirements that are “at least equal to” those imposed under the Federal Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Acts. Product produced under State Inspection is limited to intrastate commerce.

Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program which allows state-inspected facilities to operate as “same as” federally-inspected facilities and ship product in interstate commerce.



- The program conducts tests and inspections of commercial weighing and measures devices.
- Performs risk-based inspections at retail locations for accuracy of package weights, pricing accuracy at scanning points, unit pricing, W&M package and labeling requirements.
- Operates a W&M Metrology laboratory certified by The National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST is located under US Dept. of Commerce). The lab provides calibration and traceability of standards used by the inspection program and industry.
- Engages in Interagency cooperation with Agency of Transportation (AOT) in Certifying DMV Law Enforcement scales used for highway truck compliance.
- Responds to numerous and varied consumer complaints.

Weights & Measures

Food Safety and Consumer Protection Division



Weights & Measures

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Emerging Issues in Weights & Measures:

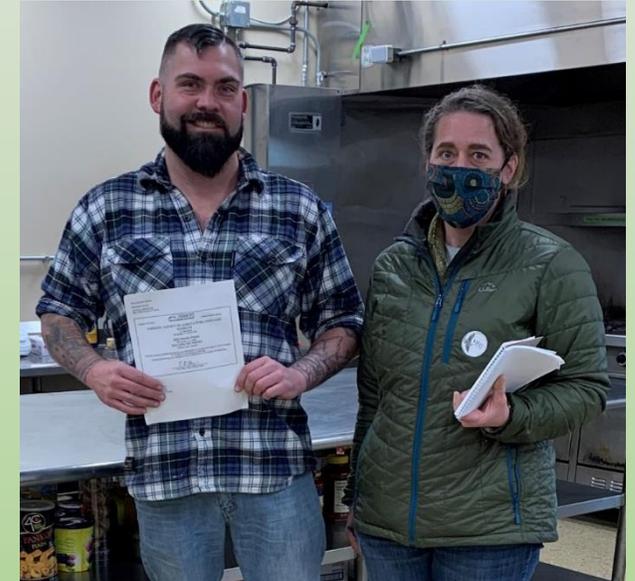
- **EV CHARGERS:** The electrification of transportation will require retail electric measuring devices. This new initiative will require additional resources in staffing and equipment.
- Recreational Cannabis retail locations will require the program to acquire new weights and scale to ensure customers are getting what they pay for. Product can cost up to \$5,000.00/lb.
- E-Commerce will continue to grow in popularity. How are consumers to be protected in a method of sale or quantity basis when purchases are made online?

What we do:

- Perform Sanitation Inspections for Farms, Dairy Plants, Bulk Milk Tanker Inspections (milk trucks), Weigh and Sample technicians, and Plant Samplers
- Assist with New Dairy Farm startups
- Assist with New Dairy Processor startups
 - Train processor staff on milk pasteurization, proper record keeping, milk sanitation

Why is our work critical?

- Maintain compliance with FDA's Pasteurized Milk Ordinance
- Maintain compliance with the National Conference of Interstate Milk Shippers (NCIMS)
- These two regulatory requirements are what allows Vermont Milk and processed dairy products to be eligible to be sold in Vermont, across the United States and exported internationally
- Vermont sells 84% of its dairy products out of state
- Dairy is 70% of Vermont's Agricultural sales
- Dairy brings \$2.2 Billion in economic activity to Vermont





Our future:

- Over the past 2 years we have implemented a successful succession planning strategy bringing on new staff, implementing a large training process while seeing over a third of our staff retire. This was done without negatively impacting the industry we serve.
- Due to the decreasing trend in dairy farms we are cross training farm inspectors to be able to inspect dairy plants. This will save taxpayer money and allow us to reduce mileage with one inspector being able to conduct two different inspections at the same location (for farmstead operations).
- If continued trends remain with the growth in dairy processing we expect to need to add a new dairy plant inspector over the next three years.

Dairy Processor Update

Volume of Milk Processed Daily Licensed Categories	Number Licensed	Number that buy in fluid milk for processing	Example of Processor
500 lbs or less	74	28	Mainly small farmstead operations
501 lbs – 9,999 lbs	37	16	Ben and Jerry's
10,000 lbs – 49,999 lbs	7	6	Vermont Creamery
50,000 lbs – 99,999 lbs	1		Monument Farms
100,000 lbs – 499,999 lbs	3	3	Commonwealth
500,000 lbs +	5	5	Cabot, St. Albans Creamery

Where does our milk and dairy products go?

- Vermont sells 84% of its dairy products out of state
- Vermont supplies 63% of the fluid milk in New England
- Vermont fluid milk is both processed in state and shipped out of state for processing

State where VT Fluid Milk is Processed In	2020 Pounds
Connecticut	15,753,452
Massachusetts	101,050,617
New Hampshire	30,830,713
New York	16,123,315
Vermont	258,241,985
Dumped	7,921,592
Total:	429,945,991

To stay up to date on what the FSCP team is doing for all Vermonterers, [subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, Field Notes.](#)

You can view previous versions of Field Notes on the [Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets](#) website.